

**FORUM ON MONITORING  
SALMON RECOVERY AND WATERSHED HEALTH  
SUMMARY MINUTES**

*DATE: June 24, 2009*

*PLACE: Natural Resources Building, Room 172*

*TIME: 10:00 a.m.*

*Olympia, Washington*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bill Wilkerson	Chair, Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health
Ken Dzinbal	Executive Coordinator, RCO
Kit Paulsen	Designee, City of Bellevue
Jim Cowles	Designee, Department of Agriculture
Brad Thompson	Designee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Carol Smith	Designee, Conservation Commission
Bob Nichols	Designee, Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Dick Wallace	Designee, Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Steve Leider	Designee, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Rob Duff	Designee, Department of Ecology
Rebecca Ponzio	Designee, Puget Sound Partnership
Paul Ancich	Designee, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group
Bruce Crawford	Designee, NOAA Fisheries
Rob Duff	Designee, Department of Ecology
Sara LaBorde	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife

IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS SUMMARY BE USED WITH THE NOTEBOOK PROVIDED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

A RECORDING IS RETAINED BY THE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE AS THE FORMAL RECORD OF MEETING.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

The Chair called for introductions from the Forum and the audience. After introductions, Carol Smith asked to move agenda item 5 before lunch. Chair Wilkerson agreed.

**Agenda Item #2: Approval of March Minutes and Approval of May Minutes**

Kit Paulsen moved to approve the March and May meeting minutes. The Forum approved.

Brad Thompson asked for his name to be added to the list of members present at the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Agenda Item #3: Forum Business Rules**

Jim Eychaner presented a draft version of Business Rules for the Forum to consider. Jim pointed out several issues, including differences in the meaning of the terms: member vs. representative. Chair Wilkerson asked about voting with regard to invited members vs required members. Jim clarified that members mandated in the statute would normally have a vote, while invited participants would not.

Ken Dzinbal added that after speaking with the Attorney General's Office, that it is the Forum's prerogative to determine how the Forum operates including how it would adopt actions within the Forum. The Attorney General's Office did not read into the statute any specific requirements for

how the Forum would adopt actions or create operating rules.

Kit Paulsen expressed an interest in local governments holding a voting position since they have been asked to participate and they pay for monitoring at the watershed level. Bob Metzger asked that the Forest Service serve as an ex officio member of the Forum, with invited guest status. Bruce Crawford agreed that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) serve as an invited guest. Jim noted that the changes could be made with a few edits. Chair Wilkerson asked to add tribes and local governments as voting members,... Jim Eychaner noted that he would discuss that change with RCO Director, Kaleen Cottingham. JPaul Ancich requested that the Regional Fish Enhancement Groups (RFEs) be added to the voting list. Sara LaBorde suggested changing the term "invited guests" to "extended membership." Jim Eychaner will check with Director Cottingham.

Chair Wilkerson asked if the Power Council would like to be added to the voting member list. Dick Wallace noted that he would like to be an ex officio member. Bob Metzger asked about the role of the ex officio members, he would like to see the ex officio members retain the ability to serve in an advisory and technical assistance role. The Forum discussed the roles of ex officio and voting members.

Jim Eychaner agreed to revise the draft Business Rules based on the discussion, and Ken Dzinbal will circulate to Forum members for further review.

#### **Agenda Item #5: Update on Agency Monitoring Budgets**

Chair Wilkerson explained that usually the Forum discusses the budget at the June meeting, but considering the status of the budget, there will not be a lengthy discussion about budget ads. Instead the Chair asked Forum members to report on the status of agency monitoring budgets across the state.

##### *Regional Fish Enhancement Groups (RFEs):*

Paul Ancich started by explaining that there has been a long debate about whether RFE volunteers are qualified to conduct monitoring. It has been determined that RFE volunteers, with the help of scientists on staff, can complete monitoring activities. Therefore RFEs are interested in assisting Forum agencies with monitoring.

##### *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):*

Bruce Crawford explained that NOAA Fisheries is involved in many monitoring efforts, including recent assistance with developing salmon monitoring strategies in Puget Sound working with the Puget Sound Partnership.

##### *Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPC)*

Dick Walled stated that the NWPPC is working with Bonneville to improve research monitoring and evaluation (RME) and continuing existing monitoring efforts. The Council is looking at different projects that Bonneville funds, and working on a strategic plan for monitoring.

##### *Puget Sound Partnership*

Rebecca Ponzio explained that the Partnership is working with Ecology on status and trends monitoring using federal (EPA) funds. The Partnership expects to hire a Monitoring Coordinator by the end of the year, and the Partnership will take over the efforts of the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium.

#### *Washington Department of Ecology*

Rob Duff noted that while the Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council decided to move the consortium into the Partnership, the storm water workgroup will work under Ecology and with the Partnership. Rob explained that thanks to National Estuary Program funding, Ecology continues to fund status and trends monitoring. The program took hits in other areas, but monitoring was not impacted.

#### *Environmental Protection Agency*

David Tetta noted that he would talk to Tom Eaton to get an update on EPA's budget status for the Forum. Chair Wilkerson added that EPA's budget is fairly safe, and from the perspective of the Leadership Council, monitoring in the Puget Sound will not be lost.

#### *Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO)*

Steve Leider noted that GSRO is going through a transition but its budget is intact, and the regional recovery budgets are whole.

#### *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*

Sara LaBorde explained that the decision packages put forward last year to build up Fish in/Fish out monitoring and habitat remote sensing were not funded. There were some reductions in adult abundance work and smolt monitoring, but the biggest cut was in the salmon and steelhead inventory program, and the stock identification program. Invasive species monitoring was not affected. The Department of Fish and Wildlife lost a habitat section manager, Lead Entity Environmental Planner, and Special Assistant to the Director, Tim Smith.

Chair Wilkerson asked how the Partnership and Forum can most help Fish and Wildlife. Rebecca asked about remote sensing at the watershed scale vs. the regional scale.

Bruce Crawford asked if hatcheries lost effectiveness monitoring, looking at wild to hatchery returns. Sara responded that they lost 9 to 10 percent in code wire tagging.

Paul Ancich asked if the Forum has the capability to recommend decision packages that go forward. Chair Wilkerson noted that the Forum can offer recommendations, and noted that status and trends and fish in/fish out are the priorities.

#### *Salmon Recovery Funding Board*

Bob Nichols noted that there is a 10 percent monitoring requirement for all Salmon Recovery Funding Board projects receiving funds from the Pacific Coast Salmon Recover Fund (PCSRF). Bob asked Ken to describe the SRFB's monitoring priorities. Ken explained that Ecology's IMW program, Status and trends, and fish in/fish out program are the SRFB's primary monitoring projects. The current funding level for SRFB monitoring has been \$2.35 million, but it is anticipated that the funding will increase to \$2.6 million.

#### *Conservation Commission*

Carol Smith noted that it has always been a challenge for 47 conservation districts to report their 2,000 actions for on-the-ground monitoring and roll-up all that information for the State of the Salmon report. The Commission needs to update their data system, the system they have in place works with PRISM, and needs to be tested with the Habitat Work Schedule. Carol's hope is to have 20 of the 47 conservation districts ready for the next state of the salmon report.

Chair Wilkerson suggested that Carol work with the Power Council or Puget Sound Partnership to help the Commission find funding for monitoring efforts.

#### *United States Fish and Wildlife Service*

Brad Thompson noted that within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Puget Sound Partnership's federal caucus has been active in requesting funding for the Elwha Watershed and Nisqually. Fifty sites were added to monitor status and trends in Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 8. The only ad in the national budget is ~ \$10 million dollars nationally for climate change. He was unsure how the funds would be used. U.S Fish and Wildlife has been petitioned to list Lake Sammamish Kokanee.

#### *Washington Department of Agriculture*

Jim Cowles noted that the Department of Agriculture funds status and trends monitoring for pesticides in salmon bearing streams, and there were no budget changes. Some of the resources for the next fiscal year have been reallocated to urban watershed monitoring through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Ecology.

#### *Local Government Representative*

Kit Paulsen noted that local governments are experiencing challenges in salmon recovery monitoring, and monitoring efforts are being reduced at the local scale. Local governments banded together to conduct monitoring in Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 8, located in King County. There are a few pilot projects that local governments are helping to move forward with Ecology.

Chair Wilkerson asked who was losing the monitoring efforts, and Kit responded that it is the central basin of the Puget Sound. Chair Wilkerson recommended that local governments work with the Partnership. Kit responded that the local governments hope to develop a plan before requesting funds from the regional organizations.

Kit briefly discussed the Monitoring Consortium's move to the Partnership, and noted that one of the goals of the Consortium is to coordinate with the storm water work group.

#### *United States Forest Service*

Bob Metzger listed the primary monitoring efforts by the USFS: watershed condition status and trends through the Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program (AREMP), and Pac Fish/In Fish (PIBO) in Eastern Washington, of which one of the key components is remote sensing.

#### *Washington Department of Health*

Ginny Stern stated that did not have any large updates, but the office of shellfish management did not report any cuts. She suggested advocating for local support because of all the cuts that the local governments are experiencing.

Chair Wilkerson noted that either the organizations are going to rely on the Forum to help, or the Forum will not be of any help at all. He asked if the Forum needs to weigh in on budgets to the legislature. He noted that the legislature and congress are willing to listen to the Forum, so it is important to use the leverage that the group has. Chair Wilkerson reiterated that agencies and organizations, in accord with the Forum, ask the funding agencies (the Puget Sound Partnership and Power Council) and request funding for specific monitoring priorities. He recommended the Forum connect itself to larger monitoring projects, like those taking place in the Puget Sound.

Ken asked the Forum if there were any budget planning or coordination processes that need to be completed prior to the August 26<sup>th</sup> Forum meeting, to ensure appropriate recommendations in time for the September 15<sup>th</sup> budget recommendations to OFM. Rob Duff questioned how well the

meeting date aligns with the Request for Proposals to the EPA, which is taking place over the next couple of months. Rob recommended that the Forum compose a letter to EPA.

The Forum decided to have Ken Dzinbal draft a letter to OFM and the legislature, and send it out for the Forum to review prior to the next meeting, incorporating any comments before it is finalized.

#### **Agenda Item #6: NOAA Draft Guidance for Monitoring Salmon Recovery**

Bruce reminded the Forum that his presentation is follow up to the March meeting's discussion of the NOAA Draft Guidance on Monitoring. The draft has been submitted to the Federal Register, and will be published on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Then there will be a 90 day public comment period. Ken recommended the Forum draft a letter from the Forum as a formal response to the federal register public notice.

Ginny recommended a smaller group to work on the letter, and allowing the entire Forum to give feedback at the August meeting.

David Tetta (EPA) reported he talked to Tom Eaton over lunch, and mentioned that EPA is posting a website on how EPA's RFP should be designed, particularly with regard to how they should address different priorities on the Action Agenda. Remote sensing and backfilling any shortfall due to storm water requirements would be useful feedback.

Chair Wilkerson added that the Monitoring Forum can lend credence to agency proposals. Ken Dzinbal should be the contact person.

Ginny Stern asked if there are any ideas about the RFP timeline. David Tetta responded that the RFP will probably not be completed by the August meeting.

#### **Agenda Item #7: Moving from Indicators to Metrics**

Ken Dzinbal presented an update on the Forum's work on moving from indicators to specific metrics. One goal of the effort is to provide for internal consistency. Thus far, two categories of indicators have been identified: Fish indicators (with a focus on abundance at the population scale), and watershed health. The major regional parties involved appear to agree that the metrics for fish high-level indicators are generally standardized and in agreement. There is less agreement on Watershed Health metrics and protocols, however there is a smaller constituency of programs to align. The metrics that were proposed at the March 2009 Forum meeting were well received.

Ken noted that the focus for the protocols is determining how to compile data for the next report. Chair Wilkerson stated that the Forum should plan to agree on at least salmon indicators by the August meeting.

Ken presented the next steps for developing metrics for fish and watershed health. Chair Wilkerson encouraged the Forum to approve metrics for watershed health at the same time that the forum approves those for fish.

#### **Agenda Item #9 Collaborative Monitoring and Evaluation for Anadromous Fish in the Columbia Basin**

Ken introduced the panel, including Greg Delwiche - Bonneville Power Administration, Brian

Lipsomb - Columbia Basin Fish Recovery Board, Nancy Leonard - Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Erik Neatherlin from WDFW, and Bruce Crawford from NOAA. Brian Lipscomb started by providing a presentation on efforts to jointly develop an integrated monitoring framework for anadromous fish in the Columbia River Basin. The presentation gave an overview of the multiagency process, and the group's timeline May 2009 – September 2009.

Chair Wilkerson responded to the presentation that the Forum has a statutory requirement to get High Level Indicators completed by the end of the year. He was pleased with the Columbia Basin's efforts and progress. Dick Wallace and Sara LaBorde echoed the Chair's kudos to the panel. Chair Wilkerson asked if the panel's metrics agree with Ken's presentation. Brian noted that the Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) criteria that the panel presented were aligned with the Forum's metrics.

Bob Metzger asked about the idea for watershed health focusing on the assessment protocol that could help with developing the indicators. Ken McDonald responded about finding a way to align the reporting from federal and private lands. Nancy Leonard added the panel, along with Ken Dzinbal, and Jen Bayer all work together on a regular basis.

The Chair asked the panel to be in touch with the Puget Sound Partnership about making the presentation to the PSP's leadership council.

#### **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

---

Bill Wilkerson, Chair

Next Meeting: September 11, 2009  
*Olympia, WA*